improvement except in the stretch from Wazirabad in Delhi to Agra owing to the large gap between the demand and the availability of the sewage treatment capacity and lack of availability of fresh water for ensuring minimum flow in the river. In this connection, an Integrated Action Plan has been formulated by the Ministry of Urban Development with implementation by the concerned Implementing Agencies.

**Red Jungle Fowl**

2318. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Wild Red Jungle Fowl, has started to disappear from the country and whether fearing its extinction, Government have decided to undertake the first national survey to identify the exact number of pure Red Jungle Fowl still alive and then launch a management and conservation plan to protect the birds;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) No scientific study on population estimate of Red Jungle Fowl is available. However, on the basis of lesser sightings of the bird in its natural habitat, a decline in its population appears to have taken place. Red Jungle Fowl is an important species as it is considered the real ancestor of domestic chicken. Considering these facts, National Board of Wildlife in its last meeting held on 19.06.2006 has approved the creation of a Specialist Group to prepare an Action Plan for the conservation of the Red Jungle Fowl. Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun has also taken up a research project on conservation of Red Jungle Fowl.

**Loss of dense forests in Southern States**

2319. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Southern States have seen a loss of area under dense forests;

(b) if so, the details of such forest cover in dense forests reported during the two years;

(c) the reasons for such loss of area;

(d) the steps taken/ to be taken to improve the forest cover under dense forests;

(e) whether it is a fact that bulk of the forests was destroyed to pave the way for development projects including mining;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the State of Forest Report, 2003 all the Southern States including the three Union Territories have shown a loss of area under dense forests as compared with the 2001 assessment. The details of such loss of area under dense forests is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) The loss in dense forests are mainly due to two reasons—real changes and interpretational changes. The real decrease is due to encroachments, felling of trees etc. whereas interpretational corrections became necessary as a part of new methodology with increased ground truthing. Crops like cotton, sugarcane etc.also give reflectance similar to that of forest cover. Ground truthing is done to verify these factors and correct the assessment accordingly.

(d) The steps taken to improve the forest cover under dense forests are as under:

(i) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans; Forest Development Agencies and eliciting people's participation; through Joint Forest Management.

(ii) Providing assistance to the States/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes especially Integrated Forest Protection Schemes and other externally aided projects.

(iii) Other measures like creation of Protected Areas, substitution of firewood by supply of LPGs, Solar lights, Biogas etc.

(iv) Implementation of National Afforestation Programme (NAP) Scheme for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining forest lands during the Tenth Five Year Plan . The Scheme is being implemented through two-tier decentralized mechanism of Forest Development Agency (FDA) at forest division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at village level.

(e) to (g) On recommendation of the State Governments to pave the way for development projects, the approval for diversion of forest land for non forestry purposes is given under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

***Statement***

*Change in dense forest cover in Southern States/UTs as per SFR, 2003 & SFR, 2001*

(Area in Km.²)

| States/UTs | 2001 Assessment | 2003 Assessment | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Andhra Pradesh | 25,827 | 24,379 | -1,448 |
| Karnataka | 26,156 | 22,461 | -3,695 |
| Kerala | 11,772 | 9,628 | -2144 |
| Tamil Nadu | 12,499 | 12,007 | -492 |
| Andaman & Nicobar | 6,593 | 6,284 | -309 |
| Lakshadweep | 27 | 12 | -15 |
| Pondicherry | 35 | 17 | -18 |

**Regional offices to check cruelty against wild animals**

†2320. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the regional offices set up for the prevention and monitoring of cruelty against wild animals under Wild Life (Protection) Act and since when these offices are functioning;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.